

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Physical Therapist

Class Code: 51191

A. Purpose:

Evaluates patients referred to physical therapy and develops, implements and supervises the appropriate treatment to improve or maintain the physical capacity, comfort and training potential of physically and mentally handicapped, injured or disabled individuals in a state institution.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Physical Therapist clinically supervises, trains and directs physical therapy aides in the provision of physical therapy services. The incumbent must be a registered physical therapist. The Physical Therapist attempts to restore bodily functions, relieve pain and prevent or limit permanent disability to those suffering from a disability, injury or disease; whereas the occupational therapist provides specific activities and adaptive equipment to help people learn skills to live independent lives.

Physical Therapist Coordinator administers a physical therapy program and supervises registered physical therapists.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions that may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Evaluates individual patient sensorineural, musculoskeletal, cardiopulmonary and integumentary system, and functional needs to ensure each patient receives quality physical therapy services.
 - a. Examines and tests the patient.
 - b. Prepares written summaries, which include strengths, problems and a plan for patient treatment, referral or future review.
2. Clinically supervises physical therapy aides to ensure the staff delivers quality physical therapy services to patients.
 - a. Interviews and selects staff.
 - b. Provides training and work direction.
 - c. Approves leave requests.
 - d. Monitors compliance with department plans, policy and procedures.
 - e. Addresses staff problems and recommends disciplinary action.
 - f. Conducts performance appraisals and completes performance documents.
3. Administers direct physical therapy treatments to high-risk patients to ensure safe physical therapy services for the patients.
4. Provides patient positioning, transfer, joint mobility, and "how to work with the physically handicapped" training to all facility staff with direct patient care, treatment or training duties to ensure continuity of physical therapy services throughout the facility.
5. Assists physicians and orthopedic consultants with relevant patient examinations by interpreting and explaining planned orthopedic surgeries and physical medicine treatments to facility staff and patients' families.

6. Participates in interdisciplinary patient review meetings and therapy department meetings by providing recommendations for treatment and progress reports to ensure each patient receives an individualized treatment plan.
7. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

The incumbent may provide work direction and/or supervision to aides who deliver prescribed treatment and training to individuals.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include receiving and giving adequate physical therapy training because of limited course work available dealing with mental and behavioral disorders and multi-handicapped patients; developing ways to motivate non-verbal patients to cooperate with treatment; motivating staff to continue treatment on patients who see no progress and often regression; scheduling limited time to adequately serve up to 200 patients; developing training programs for interdepartmental staff that stress the need for adaptive equipment such as braces, shoe, or other orthopedic devices.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include determining appropriate physical therapy treatments or assistive devices, obtaining physicians approval for any prescriptive treatments and assigning the respective duties to physical therapy aides. Other decisions made by the incumbent are recommending patients for referral to the Orthopedic and Scoliosis Clinics and to ensure follow-up procedures from those clinics are done; determining the content of safety and physical therapy related courses and training; coordinating the timing of training courses with the appropriate training personnel; writing relevant policy and procedure manuals for the physical therapy department; and ordering department supplies within the approved budget.

Decisions referred include approval of treatment plans for patients, approval of policies and procedure manuals, and administrative questions.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with staff in all training and treatment areas of the hospital, patients, and their families to conduct, coordinate, provide, and oversee the physical therapy services of the patients; weekly contact with medical specialists and administrative staff to consult on and coordinate needed support services; and occasional contact with pre-physical therapy students and physical therapy interns/students to supervise training and encourage them to pursue a career helping the mentally or behaviorally impaired and multi-handicapped citizens in state institutions.

H. Working Conditions:

Physical Therapy Department around equipment and near whirlpools and spas which cause high humidity. The incumbent must transfer and move patients, which could cause back injury or muscle strain. Patients with behavior disorders are often verbally or physically abusive to the physical therapy staff.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- human growth and development;
- anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and kinesiology;
- current methods, techniques, and purposes of physical therapy;
- the care and operation of physical therapy equipment.

Ability to:

- evaluate the condition of individuals in relation to physical therapy and to establish an appropriate treatment program;
- establish and maintain an effective working relationship with staff and individuals;
- maintain accurate records and reports of individual treatment and progress;
- communicate effectively with staff, patients, medical consultants, and patients' families;
- train allied staff in anatomy, physiology, and physical medicine areas;
- supervise;
- coordinate services with other programs at the facility.

J. Licenses and Certification:

Must be or eligible to be licensed as a Physical Therapist by South Dakota State Board of Osteopathic and Medical Examiners and American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).